

CAH
March 6, 1959
12:40 p.m.

Photocopy to
S. M. Dulles

MEMORANDUM OF TELEPHONE CONVERSATION WITH SECY DULLES

The Secretary telephoned from Walter Reed. Said he was feeling better than he had a little while ago; that he had just had a blood transfusion; that he has been feeling very weak; that the injections have all been pretty powerful; that he has lost a lot of weight quickly and has felt weak.

Secy said he understood the President may be coming out this afternoon and CAH said he knew the President hoped to come out around 4:00. Secy asked what developed this morning. CAH said the meeting this morning lasted an hour and a-half; there was a good deal of prodding of what we do under certain contingencies. CAH said the President convinced them of the fact that we cannot fight a ground battle around Berlin with the Germans and the Russians--that is out. President said if Soviets take it by force we have to then face up to the big decision but in the meanwhile we would do everything feasible to negotiate. CAH said it ended up on a very cheerful note; they went out and saw the press and took the line that it was an interesting session and that they are in complete agreement we would remain firm while continuing all fruitful negotiations. CAH said they were trying to get down to brass tacks and CAH said he thought it was good to convince them we will not fight a ground battle.

JFD said that is what he said to ~~Adenauer~~ Adenauer; JFD told Adenauer it has to be a war we can win, not one we are bound to lose.

CAH said Lyndon Johnson kept trying to get President to make a categorical statement that we had enough strength if it came to war--obviously this was due in part to the political arguments on budget versus defense preparedness--and CAH said he thinks the President gave the feeling we are taking all preparations necessary; consulting with our allies in the free world; and confidence that if we had to meet this situation we could. CAH said it was interesting that on the Senate side both Lydon Johnson and Wicksen were strong in coming up to the final decision and making it in favor of war. On the House side, both Mayburd and Halleck said we had to keep saying we would continue negotiations to settle this. CAH said there is another session this afternoon. JFD asked with who, and CAH said the President was meeting with Fulbright and ranking members in Senate and House of Foreign Affairs and Armed Services Committees. JFD expressed some surprise and CAH said we were under tremendous pressures from the Hill. In that connection, CAH said Fulbright announced in the paper this morning he was calling CAH up to testify next Tuesday before the Foreign Relations Committee and CAH said he thought this was extremely bad. CAH said both he and President hope to discuss this with Fulbright this afternoon. CAH said this is not the way to conduct this business at the moment; that even if hearing is in Executive Session, there will most likely be leaks.

JFD said it must be realized that if the Soviets by threatening to do things by force do destroy our rights and force us to retreat and make concessions, it is just the beginning. JFD said if we are perfectly firm in our position he is personally convinced that there is not one chance in 1000 the Soviets will push it to the point of war.

CAH said he didn't like the British line in Selwyn Lloyd's message. CAH said he showed it to the President and showed him draft reply to Soviet note prepared by Merchant. CAH said he recommended to President we go ahead a shoot the draft to our allies instead of waiting until Macmillan comes here. JFD said Macmillan is trying to get all the domestic political mileage he can get and JFD said we are not unsympathetic to this since we don't want to see Bevan win the election, and JFD said within reason there is no objection to giving him an important role as far as the appearance of things is concerned but to JFD's mind this whole thing is very vital from the standpoint of our whole NATO posture and position. JFD said there is no point in having troops there--which are expensive to maintain--if those troops won't be used if need be.

CAH said the President made clear yesterday at NSC that regarding overflights, communications, etc., we can't go along by ourselves. We would have to pull out of NATO. JFD said he thinks the Germans and the French are prepared to stand firm; JFD said the only pressures are from the British and they will be powerful. CAH referred to a remark made by Caccia to Dillon at dinner to the effect that "the British people will never be atomized for the sake of Berlin". JFD said what are they willing to be "atomized" for; if that is true we better ~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~ cut them out. JFD said he didn't like the communique; that there were signs of weakness all through it. CAH agreed.

CAH said on the Camp David idea, he was certain the President and Macmillan~~X~~ would not do this unless JFD could go there. CAH said the President felt the facilities there were more comfortable for JFD and he could be taken care of better and be able to rest as JFD felt need of it rather than have JFD travelling back and forth to the White House. CAH reiterated he was certain President and Macmillan would abandon this idea if it were not feasible from JFD's standpoint. JFD said it is a very awkward situation. JFD said he didn't want to hold on to the title if he couldn't do the job. CAH said the Secy should not worry about this; that all anybody wanted was for JFD to get back into harness. JFD said the doctor told him today there would probably be two weeks more of the X-ray, and said that is a very weakening process and that it will still be going on during the Macmillan visit, but JFD said treatment can be interrupted without serious impairment. JFD said he is really worried that Macmillan is going to be prepared to compromise on recognition of the GDR, etc., which would be a gain for the Soviet Union. JFD said he doesn't think they are entitled to get any net gain. Said what is wrong with the Berlin situation? Said we nearly had a war ten years ago and we reached a compromise; the only trouble is

it has been ~~XXXX~~ going too good from the Communist's standpoint. JFD said this is just so much talk about competition between their system and ours; that when they are competing nearby, they can't stand the comparison. JFD said that is the only reason in the world for raising this problem. Said West~~XX~~ Berlin doesn't want a change; they don't mind being occupied; their productivity, population, etc is increasing and conditions are good. JFD said what is all the reason for this excitement? Secy then said jokingly that CAH could see he had just had a blood transfusion.

JFD said he would like to see CAH over the weekend and CAH said he would be available whenever the Secy wanted him.



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